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RUEHBS/AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS 5040
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RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 1361
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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 ANKARA 007630

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JCS PASS J-5/CDR S. WRIGHT

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [OPRC](#) [KMDR](#) [TU](#)
SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT
THURSDAY, DECEMBER 29, 2005

THIS REPORT PRESENTS THE TURKISH PRESS SUMMARY UNDER THREE
THEMES:

HEADLINES
BRIEFING
EDITORIAL OPINION

HEADLINES

MASS APPEAL
Private TV Kurdish Broadcasts to Begin in January - Hurriyet
FM Gul: "301 Cases Have the Same Effects as 'Midnight
Express' -Hurriyet
A New 'Midnight Express' Incident - Sabah
Gul Comments on Article 301 Cases - Aksam
President Bush in Preparation for Retirement - Sabah
Critical Terror Report on Today's NSC Agenda - Milliyet
Israel Attacks Lebanon - Milliyet
Le Figaro: "Illegal Immigrants Enter EU through Northern
Cyprus" - Vatan
Secretary Rice to Visit Turkey in the First Months of 2006 -

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Star
The Countdown for EU Entry has Started - Turkiye
Washington Times: 'Turkey is Right on the PKK Issue' -
Turkiye

OPINION MAKERS
Gul: "Article 301 could be Amended" - Radikal
Gul compares Effects of Article 301 to Film "Midnight
Express" - Yeni Safak
New Hopes for QIZ with the US - Radikal
MFA Spokesman Tan: "No Israeli Request for Joint Military
Exercises" - Radikal
The Last NSC Meeting of 2005 - Cumhuriyet

Sanctions from US to Iran - Cumhuriyet
Khalilzad: "PKK is a Terrorist Organization and shouldn't be Sheltered in Northern Iraq" - Zaman
Israeli Planes Bombed Palestinian Camps in Lebanon - Yeni Safak
Kurdish Broadcasting Begins in January - Yeni Safak

BRIEFING

Gul Comments on Article 301: Today's papers give extensive front page coverage to the comments of Foreign Minister Abdullah Gul on the trial of Orhan Pamuk and the investigation against EP member Lagendijk. "Radikal" quotes Gul as saying "article 301 could be amended if necessary." "Yeni Safak" quotes Gul as saying "the suits filed for violations of article 301 caused as much damage to Turkey's image as the movie 'Midnight Express' did." "Sabah" reports that the EU officials were stunned by the developments in Turkey, and especially the investigation against Lagendijk. EU sources say that even if article 301 is abolished, the latest developments show that there is no freedom of expression in Turkey.

The Last National Security Council (NSC) Meeting of 2005: "Hurriyet", "Milliyet" and "Cumhuriyet" report that the last NSC meeting of 2005 will be held today. It is expected that the military will present the NSC with a report on the minority identity controversy. "Hurriyet" says there are allegations that the Military was uneasy about the comments of PM Erdogan on the issue. The Military is expected to express this uneasiness in the report, saying that according to article 66 of the Constitution, every citizen of Turkey is a Turk. PKK, Cyprus and Iraq will be the other issues to debated at the NSC.

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Israel Attacks Lebanon: "Milliyet" and "Yeni Safak" report that Israel, in retaliation for Palestinian rocket attacks, launched an operation against Palestinian guerilla camps in Lebanon.

Sanctions from US to Iran: "Cumhuriyet" says the US has confirmed the application of sanctions against 6 Chinese, 2 Indian and 1 Austrian company for selling Iran equipment and technology for military purposes.

Free Trade opes Between the US and Turkey: "Radikal" reports that the meetings between Turkey and the US to increase trade and investment will resume after a three year break. The TIFA Council (Trade and Investment Frame Agreement) was unable to convene for the last three years. The establishment of Qualified Industrial Zones (QIZ) is among the issues going to be discussed at the meeting.

EDITORIAL OPINION: Iraq; Turkey-EU

"Will Elections Bring Peace to Iraq?"
Zafer Atay observed in the economic-political daily "Dunya" (12/29): "Iraq has gone through a multiple election process for the first time in its history. However, the election process has not brought peace to Iraq let alone eliminated the potential threat of division. This is because the elections were a race between ethnic and religious groups, proving that the people of Iraq have no concept of 'being Iraqi'. During the elections, Shiites were backed by Iran which helped most of the pro-Iranian figures to win. As for the Sunnis, even though there was significant participation in the elections, the results were not satisfactory since the Sunnis did not run as a united bloc. The Iraqi parliament is expected to convene before the end of 2005 to elect a president and two deputy presidents. Afterwards the establishment of the government will start. A Shiite premier is expected to take charge and form a national unity government. But a Sunni boycott is also possible, so is resistance by Sunni groups. In sum, Iraq will have to wait

for a while to achieve real democracy because currently all parties in Iraq are interpreting democracy according to their own interests."

"Relations with the EU Could Be Frozen in 2006"
Semih Idiz asserted in the mainstream daily "Milliyet" (12/29): "It is obvious that the year 2006 will bring tension between Turkey and the EU on the Cyprus issue as well as on Turkey's perceived insufficient application of EU reforms. The problems related to freedom of expression are going to be the major concern in 2006. Turkey presents a lame image when it comes to the full implementation of freedom of expression, and it doesn't look like this will change in 2006. Given the current developments, we can conclude that the year 2006 will go even worse in that respect. There are of course some circles in Turkey who desire cutting off relations with the EU. Turkey launched a start toward EU membership in 2005 but it is unrealistic to hope for some concrete steps in 2006. This is not pessimism, but simply drawing a conclusion after evaluating the available data."

WILSON